10 States have experienced floods of varying magnitutde, Bihar and Assam being the worst hit. As per reports received upto 3.8.2002, 12655 villages in 64 districts in these States are affected covering a population of 1.75 crore. Cropped area of about 10.5 lakh ha. and about 75,000 houses have been damaged taking a toll of 339 human lives.

(c) and (d) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments to be in a state of preparedness and provide relief to the people affected by natural disasters. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments. Army columns; with rescue boats and Air Force helicopters for air dropping and evacuation have been provided by the Central Government to the States of Assam and Bihar.

(e) The Ministry of Water Resources has been working with the States in the area of flood control. Many of the rivers currently in spate originate in Nepal and the Government of India has also been interacting with the Government of Nepal with regard to the steps to be taken in this regard.

Natural disasters in the country

2265. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that India is becoming more and more prone to natural disasters;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last five years year-wise and State-wise;

(c) whether the country has well-knit forecasting systems and observational network to warm the authorities of the impending events;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of the disaster management machinery in operation to meet the national calamities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) On account of urbanization and population growth, the impact of natural disasters is felt to a larger extent. During the last five years, there have been two major disasters namely Super Cyclone, Orissa in October, 1999 and Gujarat earthquake in January, 2001

besides the Chamoli earthquake in March, 1998 and the Gujarat cyclone in June 1998. Floods and drought are a regular feature every year in one or the other part of the country.

(c) and (d) Central Water Commission (CWC) in the Ministry of Water Resources is the nodal organisation for flood forecasting and warning and has 159 flood forecasting stations in different parts of the country. India Meteorological Department (IMD) has also set up Flood Meteorological offices (FMOs) at 10 locations to provide meteorological support to the CWC. For cyclones, IMD under the Ministry of Science & Technology is the nodal organisation and has established a full fledged National Cyclone Warning system which includes three area cyclone warning centres at Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai and the three cyclone warning centres at Bhubaneshwar, Vishakapatnam and Ahmedabad. IMD also maintains a Network of coastal radars and surface and upper air observatories along the coast line for observation and surveillance of tropical cyclones. In case of earthquakes, there is no scientific technique available in the world to forecast its occurrence with a reasonable degree of accuracy in regard to space, time and magnitude. However, the IMD has a countrywide network of 50 siesmological observatories.

(e) At the national level, Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal Ministry for coordinating central efforts in case of natural (except drought) and man made disasters. The other Central Departments which provide emergency support functions are Ministry of Defence including Armed forces, Health, Rural Development Road Transport and Highways, Railways, Urban Development, Food & Public Distribution, Petroleum & Natural Gas, Power, Communication, Science & Technology etc. There is also an empowered Group of Ministers for Disaster Management and a High Level Committee to consider cases of grant of additional financial assistance to States from the National Calamity Contingency Fund.

Killings of BSF personnel

2266. SHRI SHANKAR ROY CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the progress and outcome of the enquiry into the circumstances under which 16 BSF personnel were killed in the village of Boruibari on the Indo-Bangladesh Border recently;